

To the Class of 1958

FRANCIS BOWEN

Rhetoric 101, Theme 5

IN SEVERAL MONTHS A FEW OF YOU IN THE HIGH SCHOOL class of 1958 will be entering the University of Illinois. Along with many other people I believe that you have made an excellent choice. Presently you will agree. But during the first few weeks, or even months, you may ask yourself, "What am I doing *here*? Why didn't I choose a small college closer to home?" To these questions I can offer no valid answers. You alone will gradually come to realize the merits of the University.

A merit that you may wonder about at first is the size of the University of Illinois. Because of its great size, and in order to be efficient, the University must function as a machine. You will be disheartened by the cold indifference that meets you during your first week. Receive that welcome with indifference. Keep in mind that even though you feel unwelcome, you are to become an important part of the machine. *You* are the University, not the professors and administrators, not the buildings and physical aspects. You are the moving parts, the vital parts of the machine which is called the University. The instructors and professors are merely mechanics who go running around oiling and polishing the machinery. They constantly keep polishing and grinding in order that you may fit in with the rest of the machinery for efficient operation.

This polishing and grinding is not a subtle feat; at times it is quite painful. The instructors will tear you apart. "Conform!" they shout. "Conform! You must conform to fit the machinery of society!" But in the next breath you will hear them screaming, "Originality! To be a true person you must have originality!"

And your instructors will sit complacently in their own little world and throw these criticisms faster than you thought possible. Occasionally a word of encouragement and praise emerges with the criticisms, but you will have to hunt for it. You will wonder if you are missing the meaning of college. Basically you have come to college to learn, not to be criticized. But you must realize that only through criticism can you learn and improve your ability to learn.

Nevertheless, the frequent criticisms will discourage you so much that you will forget your studies and go to a movie. Fine. I believe that this is the best thing to do at certain times. But do not misinterpret my meaning. You should not make a habit of getting discouraged and throwing your books in a corner. Hard work is the only solution most of the time, and it is the only practical way out.

But remember that the machinery comes to a halt during the weekend, and thus you may find yourself with a few free hours. Do something with those free hours. Do something different, something unrelated to your subjects. And

above all, find a friend. Most often he will be the wheel in the machinery above you or that cog below you. A true friend can enrich your college life.

But there is no set pattern for acquiring a friend, as there has been no text written as a guide to the University of Illinois. Thus I am not able to say what your feelings will be as you enter the University next fall. I can only make calculated guesses. I can only say that you alone determine your college career and only you can make it pleasant and successful.

Looking Back From 1984 or 85

PAUL FRIEDMAN
Rhetoric 101, Theme 8

He wasn't interested in anything that had
anything to do with anything real,
What he really was interested in was anything
that had nothing to do with everything.

He liked to read but what he read was not
what was Written, but rather what was written
about what someone wrote,
He liked to write but he only wrote about
what people liked to read so he really didn't Write.

He liked women but he wouldn't marry a Woman,
He liked to move but he didn't like to travel
and he wouldn't Settle Down,
He liked to tap his toe to a trumpet but
he wouldn't bare his Brain to the Beat,
He liked to argue (for he had a good mind)
but it really didn't matter which side he argued for,
He died Hungry.

If he lived in the 1860's his life was lousy,
If he lived in the 1890's his life was lousy,
If he lived in Hemingway's twenties his life was
lousy but he picked up many brothers,
If he lived in Kerovac's fifties he was without
socks, without clean underwear, and again
with an increased number of brothers.

He left \$51,300.30 to no one.
He also left his 30 shares of AT & T to no one.
He did not want to insult his friends.
He caused one doctor to be fired.

The doctor is still sure he died of malnutrition
but everyone knows he had a big appetite.

The members of the Caldron committee regret that the theme "How to Get Ahead in Life" in the April, 1958, issue was plagiarized.

Old John and Man

SUE DIVAN

Rhetoric 102, Final theme

THE DAY WAS HOT—STEAMING HOT—AND SULTRY AS only a late spring afternoon in a small Southern town can be. My starched, white collar irritated my neck, and the light, black suit seemed arm and heavy—suddenly unbearable in the heat. I had walked from the cemetery at the edge of town, and I was tired; I longed to reach my cool, quiet, comforting destination. I walked along the narrow, tree-shaded sidewalk, staring at the crooked, spider-web cracks in the old cement, but not really seeing them. I was thinking—thinking about the funeral at which I had been present earlier in the afternoon. The man who died and had been buried that day was old John, the village conversation piece, an eccentric old man whom the town had jokingly called its “mayor.”

John was eighty-seven years old and had lived alone, apparently with no living relatives and only his pension for support, in a squalid little frame house turned black from years of weathering and patched here and there with unpainted boards. The little black house stood just two doors down from the main business district, and the town council had begged John to sell. At first they offered him a reasonable price, then a fabulous sum, for the dirty little house and the grass-barren lot. But John would not sell. He was old, they said, and would not be happy if he died anywhere else but right there in his little house, just two doors down from the business district.

So John was taunted, belittled, hated. The school boys, flying by on bicycles, would sneer at him and call him names. The little girls would cross the street to avoid walking in front of “that house.” And the townspeople put into effect a policy of ignoring him. No one talked to him and he was left alone.

But what the townspeople did not notice, or did not bother to notice, was the look in John's eyes—the patient, knowing, waiting look—a look so beautiful it made me turn away whenever I visited John and talked to him. And what they did not see was inside John's house—the old, dog-eared books on the board shelves, and the worn Bible on the table by the rocking chair. And outside John's house, they did not see the tulips and early roses blooming in the back yard, nor did they see, tied to the back fence, the dogs which he kept and loved, with infinite kindness and patience. The townspeople had passed judgment on old John, but now someone else, someone better, was passing His judgment.

I looked up and saw that I was nearing home. I saw the little white church at the end of the street, shaded by the tall, green elms on either side. I saw above the leaves the slim, white steeple and the silent bell in the belfry. I walked up the steps and into the cool, quiet sanctuary. Making my way up

the aisle toward the altar, I removed the stiff, high collar and unbuttoned the coat of the light, black suit, the symbols of my profession. God would recognize me without them, I thought. I knelt before the Throne of God and prayed for old John and Man.

Footsteps

SANDRA SELLERS

Rhetoric 102, Theme 8

AS I SAT AT THE HEAVY LIBRARY TABLE WITH MY back towards the door, I heard voices from the hall, low, mumbling and laughing in a quiet manner. Rubber-soled shoes squeaked against the waxed, linoleum-like floor. The cool, soft breeze that came through the window carried the sounds of the night, deep sounds like those of a huge, even running machine heard from a distance. The sounds of the footsteps in the hall and behind me drew my attention away from my work and I sat, listening. The sharp, clear tisk-tisk-tisk of swift feet climbing the stairs changed to a firm, determined step and faded down the hall. Quick, light steps hurried to the door, came in, and went to a table somewhere behind me.

I listened carefully and liked what I heard. With my eyes closed I began to imagine what these people were like from the sounds of their footsteps. For a little while the hall outside the fourth floor library was quiet. Then from somewhere down the corridor, footsteps approached. The steps were an uneven thup-thup . . . thup-thup, and I mentally envisioned a crippled man, walking slowly. Clackety clackety clackety clackety, the picture of a hurrying coeds came to my mind and the tiskity-tisk, tiskity-tisk of the shoes against the metal edge guards of the steps as they descended confirmed my idea. The light, hurried steps of a girl and the slower, heavier ones of a man made me think of a happy couple, walking hand in hand through the hall.

The big clock in the tower chimed out bunngg — bunngg — bunngg bunngg. . . bunngg — bunngg — bunngg — bunngg. It was nine-thirty. The sounds of footsteps began to fill the hall as people started leaving the library. I listened and I heard determined people, unhappy people, people with a purpose, and some who were either very tired or had no purpose at all. I heard one particular set of footsteps and I listened intently. Evenly they climbed the steps, reached the top, then started towards the library door. Stipch stipch, stipch, clup-stipch, stipch . . . stipch . . . stipch. I didn't need to guess about the person who walked like that. He was young, tall, good-looking with eyes that saw beyond the scenes they looked at and shoulders that carried the weight of problems not always his own. Stipch . . . clup-stipch . . . clup-stipch . . . stipch . . . clup-stipch. They stopped behind me.

"Sue?" The voice was soft, with the unbelievable gentleness that only a strong, tall man possesses. "Are you ready?"

"Yes, Ted. Let's go."

Carefully he put my sweater across my shoulders, handed me my books, and began to wheel me out of the library and towards the elevator.

The Battle for Better Education

PAUL W. HIGGINBOTHAM

Rhetoric 102, Theme 8

OVER FIVE SCORE YEARS AGO, OUR FOREFATHERS founded in this state, a new educational system with the honorable intention of teaching young Americans of their rights, privileges, and heritage under the auspices of a country rich in natural and human resources. Now we are engaged in a great civil crisis, testing whether that crisis shall finally end a partly, if not wholly, antique educational system. We are come to decide what can be added to or detracted from our educational system in order that we may, in future years, continue to compete with a hostile and aggressive world.

Maybe Abe Lincoln would have said something similar to the above were he alive to be called upon today, but rather and more likely, he might have said simply, "Is our present educational system effective, and if it isn't, what can we do to make it so?"

The need for a "system" shake-up is quite evident in the light of recent statistics. Only half of the total number of young people who *could* succeed in college ever get there, and of this half, an even smaller percentage stay to graduate. Russia is graduating over twice as many engineers, physicists, chemists, and professional people in the other branches of theoretical and applied sciences as the U. S. What then are we to do to hold our own, or more correctly, to catch up with our formidable opponent?

Indeed, the road to sound educational practices is a deeply rutted one; it is grooved by the failures of previous years. It is furrowed and plowed by our own doubts as to whether or not our free society has failed in an educational sense. But this need not be, for there are many, many solutions to this educational puzzle, three of which I would specifically like to point out.

Number one—we must give our teachers better pay. If we are to have a sound educational system, we must have good teachers; we must have an adequate number of teachers. At the present we are woefully lacking in both quantity and quality. The problem, and its solution, is amply stated in the words of Rear Admiral Hyman Rickover, "If we insist on paying our teachers as though they were second-rate professional people, then that's what we'll

get—second-rate individuals. . . . It is a sad thing indeed when a country as rich as the United States is, will spend as little as we do for education. Our teachers and instructors are *college graduates*, and as such they deserve the respect, cooperation, and appreciation due to them from our society. A good start towards demonstrating these things is an increase in salary. Money will also attract more people into the field of education.

Number two—we must increase our financial aids to students who have the ability to do work at the college level. Financial aid doesn't have to be administered in the form of a give-away; very often a program can be designed as to help the nation in another, equally important way. A typical example and proof of this is the G.I. bill. It not only gave financial aid, but it increased our ready military strength as well. Many, many boys joined the service with an eye for the future and for the aid that could be had from Uncle Sam.

Number three—we must clear the "dead wood" out of our schools. There are many young people who upon completion of grammar school, wish to discontinue their education because of lack of interest or for other reasons. At the present time there exists a statute which makes it mandatory for all children to attend school until the age of sixteen. This statute exerts a strong deterrent effect upon the efficiency of administration achieved in our school; it makes a truancy department necessary for most schools. Our schools are tremendously over-crowded, and yet we insist upon forcing people who are not interested to attend them.

If we face facts, we will readily see that there are many young people who are quite ready and willing to quit school at fourteen, even thirteen, "to learn a trade." In an effort to hold the interest of these young people, we have extended our schools to include many different types of shops which supposedly teach many different types of trades.

The only drawback in expansion to include the field of trades is that we cannot expect a small or even medium size school to keep directly abreast of recent developments in some of the rapidly moving trades. For instance, many high schools teach printing in a shop course, but they teach it with old cast lead characters which are hand set into frames. The newest and most modern printing process in commercial use is the offset method. In this method no type whatsoever is used, but printing is done from a chemically etched plate. The cheapest offset presses cost ten to fifteen thousand dollars. Moreover, each and every day newer and better chemicals and processes are being developed for this field. Can we reasonably expect a school to keep abreast of such developments?

My solution to the whole problem is to eliminate the "dead wood." Eliminate shop courses and let the space be used for classrooms or laboratories. Eliminate those individuals who do not want to continue their education by eliminating the law that forces them to. Invoke tight child-labor laws to pro-

ent unscrupulous individuals from taking advantage of the free child. Let the burden of teaching *skills* fall where it belongs—in the lap of industry where the newest and most modern equipment is readily available. *Let* the young people quit school and learn a trade at an early age, simply prevent them from doing heavy labor until a later age.

But when we have done all this, let us not close the educational door on those who have chosen to quit school. Let us make classes for all grades from first through high school available to *anyone* as either a full or part time student. In other words, let's put it there for the taking, but let's allow our people to decide for themselves whether or not they want it.

The Universe and Dr. Einstein

JOHN TASCHER

Rhetoric 102, Theme 13

ALBERT EINSTEIN STANDS AS THE GREATEST THEORIST and mathematician of modern times. He possessed a mind capable of reasoning mathematical and physical relationships of such great complexity that most people cannot even begin to comprehend the full meaning of his theories. In this capacity, Einstein has created a new mathematical conception of the universe, which has destroyed the old mechanical universe of Newton. In the book *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Lincoln Barnett presents the structural and metaphysical properties of the universe as explained by Einstein and the other foremost physicists of the present day.

The book deals mainly with the description and the logic of the Einsteinian concept of the universe. It describes the inadequacies of the Newtonian concept of the universe, which caused it to be replaced by the modern concept. Even though the mechanical universe of Newton explained the movements of the heavenly bodies very adequately, it contained certain seemingly insignificant errors which caused it to be branded as incorrect. Thus the publication of the Quantum Theory by Max Planck and the Theories of Relativity by Einstein gave rise to a new, but unrealistic, universe.

Modern physics must employ abstruse methods of description, since the equations of quantum physics define more accurately than would mechanical models the workings of the universe. Therefore, the aim of the modern physicist is to define the laws of nature in more precise mathematical terms.

A good example of the application of mathematical logic was in connection with the Special Theory of Relativity. Einstein said in this theory that there is no such thing as absolute time or an absolute space interval. Both quantities depend upon the coordinate system in which they are related. Trying to tie the infinite number of coordinate systems into one absolute system would

be mechanically impossible. However, through the mathematics of the Lorentz Transformation, the scientist can overcome this impasse. In order to describe the phenomena of nature in terms that are consistent for all systems throughout the universe, the scientist must plug the measurements of time and space into the Lorentz Transformation as variables. Through this equation, Einstein was able to discover a number of new and extraordinary truths about the physical universe.

A direct outgrowth of the Lorentz Transformation was the theory that time slows down and distances contract as the velocity of the system is increased. According to Einstein's mathematics, a yardstick would shrink to about half its length at the velocity of ninety per cent of the speed of light and would theoretically shrink away into nothingness at the velocity of light. As a direct consequence, therefore, nothing in the universe can move with a velocity equal to or greater than that of light.

Since time slows down with an increase in velocity, a man in a rocket travelling close to the speed of light could theoretically travel to a distant star years away, according to earth-time, in what would appear to him a few days. However, he would be shocked to find his friends on earth years older when he returned.

Scientists now claim that everything in the universe can be stripped down to a few basic quantities: space, time, matter, energy, and gravity. In turn, these quantities are interdependent on each other, so that the state of the universe can be resolved into unity. However, as this simplicity emerges from complexity, the fundamental laws become more remote from human experience. In the evolution of scientific thought, scientists have come to the conclusion that since human intellect is a finite quality, there is a definite limit to man's knowledge. Science can never hope to find the ultimate in truth. All scientists can do is to delve into the causes and effects of a phenomenon and not into what it is or why it exists.

In *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Lincoln Barnett tries to give an account of the structure of the universe and the nature of quantum physics in the layman's language. In the work, he discusses the philosophy and limitations of science. Since science, technology, and space travel are important topics at the present time, every educated person should have some insight into the present status of science and its future possibilities. Therefore, inasmuch as the book is well written on an important topic, it is valuable to the average reader who wants to gain an insight into modern physics. The influence of Einstein's theories, which may now seem highly theoretical and impractical, will become incalculably great in the future. (The awesome power of the atomic bomb displayed the practicality and application of Einstein's theories. Atomic power is an indication of what is to come.)

The conclusions of the book are startling. The book shocks its reader with the feeling of the insignificance of man in the fathomless universe. It is on

the very few books in scientific literature which explicitly state the finiteness of human intelligence and the limitations of man's potential. Only in this way can the layman begin to grasp the meaning of macrocosm and microcosm. At the same time, however, the book could have a detrimental effect on its readers. It fosters pessimism and realization of the fruitlessness of man's attempt to solve the riddles of his environment. The book might breed discouragement in many who are actively interested in the subject. However, it emphasizes the pragmatic values of science and the fact that it does not matter what a phenomenon is if we can predict what it does.

Lincoln Barnett discussed most of the basic tenets of relativity and modern cosmology. To readers of scientific background the book is highly inconclusive, but to the general reader, the résumé is fairly complete and adequate. A more complete discussion would probably be above the level of most people.

Since the facts and conclusions in the book come directly from the top scientific authorities of the day, the accuracy of the book cannot very well be questioned. The march of science will replace many of the details, of course, but the basic relationships in the Einsteinian Universe will become the axioms of future cosmology. Einstein was so far ahead of the scientific level of his time that it will be many years before his genius will be fully appreciated and understood.

One of the striking features of the book is the clarity with which it is written. The organization and development of the subject are almost flawless. The book is as readable as science fiction because it is quick to read, if not relaxing. The author did a very excellent job on a difficult subject, and the book should continue to be one of the best in scientific literature.

Do It Yourself

ELIZABETH ROBERTS

Rhetoric 101, Theme 3

DO-IT-YOURSELF KITS ARE FAST BECOMING ONE OF THE most popular forms of recreation in the United States. There are boat kits, coffee table kits, radio kits, and even television kits. All we need now are theme kits—and I'm serious—we do need them. To be more exact, we need a do-it-yourself attitude toward writing.

Most of the writing we read today is in the form of long, connected strings of store-bought verbs and nouns and other parts of speech. And yet the author has no lack of raw material. There are already enough words to fill reams of writing paper, and there are new words waiting to be coined.

The do-it-yourself man has stopped meekly taking what the stores offer. He has decided to make his own furniture and surroundings to fit his own

personality. The results may be crude at first, but with patience the project will improve. Soon the do-it-yourselfer will be able to make the exact coffee table he wants. He can select rare woods, colorful paints, and unique designs.

And it can be exactly the same with words. A coffee table or a theme—both are better if you use rare and personally selected materials, and put them together the way you yourself want them. Don't be afraid to use color in your adjectives and design in your sentences. You are seeing things differently; write about them differently, not wildly or exotically, but with each word personally yours.

Why is this difficult? It takes work to look at each word and choose the most exact or the most colorful one. It takes heavy tools—dictionaries and grammar books—to fashion a smooth, concise idea in words. And hardest of all, it takes thought. In order to choose the right words and phrases to prove your point, you must know exactly what your point is. You must have a workable blue-print before you do-it-yourself with words.

Good Neighbor Policy

CINDY LEE

Rhetoric 102, Theme 12

MRS. VAN HORN WAS A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN WOMAN. She read the Bible daily, she tithed, she donated to worthy causes, she was deeply involved in charity work, she was president of her church circle—and she belonged to the WCTU. Everyone admired Mrs. Van Horn. What a wonderful person she was! How selfless! How noble she was! Almost everyone belonged to the I-Love-Mrs. Van Horn fan club.

But then came a sad day. Mrs. Van Horn had to move to Wenosha in order to nurse her poor ailing mother. She would have to leave her innumerable friends. She must sell the dear little white house which contained so many fond memories of her late husband (God rest his soul). But Mrs. Van Horn cheerfully bore these inconveniences. She was a noble person.

Now Mrs. Van Horn had to endure a really trying six months during which countless strangers traipsed disrespectfully through the little white house. But they didn't love the little house as she did; they asked all sort of probing questions. Did the fireplace draw well? What kind of heating did she have? Was the insulation good? How could *she* know? Her husband had cared for these matters, and he (God rest his soul) was now dead, *as she* liked to say, "passed into the great beyond."

But then a different sort of man came. He carefully examined the little house and then fell in love with it. "This is what I've always wanted," he rejoiced. He did not argue about the price, as everyone else had done, and he

said that he would pay cash. Moreover, he seemed to be quite a personable and likeable young man. But Mrs. Van Horn looked into his inquiring dark eyes and she stared at his black skin; then she replied, "No, I cannot sell it to you." She saw the joy die in his face. "I understand," he answered abruptly, and he left.

"I couldn't do anything else," Mrs. Van Horn thought to herself. "What would my neighbors think of me? And how would his moving in affect the neighborhood? After all, my first allegiance is to my friends and neighborhood. And it's better for *him* too. Why, he would be snubbed and ignored; he would be an outcast; he would be socially ostracized. I'm really doing him a favor. He said that he would pay my asking price in cash too. But I don't mind giving up a few dollars. I have a service to perform for my neighborhood and my friends."

She finally sold the house to a Mr. MacDougal. He found fault with everything about the house. He managed to persuade her to cut her price by a thousand dollars. He had eight children (and there were only three bedrooms) and a dog.

The neighbors hated Mr. MacDougal. His children were the scourge of the community. His dog raided garbage cans and took a fiendish delight in scattering remnants of last week's dinners all over. Mr. MacDougal, moreover, got raging drunk once a week and beat his wife. She retaliated by throwing dishes at him. Drunken curses, crying children, and splintering crockery shattered the peace.

"Why couldn't that Mrs. Van Horn have been careful?" raged the neighbors. "Why wasn't she more thoughtful?" asked her ex-friends. "She was in such a desperate hurry to move that she just sold it to anyone who came along," whispered her new enemies.

If Mrs. Van Horn had learned of her "friends'" thoughts, she would have felt deeply hurt. But she also would have felt like a martyr. She had done her duty as she had seen it. A noble person was Mrs. Van Horn.

Viewpoints on Autumn

SUSANNE CAMPBELL

Rhetoric 101, Theme 1

AUTUMN HAS ARRIVED—THE SEASON OF MATURING AND the season of declining; the season of rejoicing and the season of despairing. L'Allegro, the cheerful man, sees the beauty in the hillsides and feels satisfaction in the completion of a busy summer's work. On the other hand, II Penseroso, the thoughtful man, sees autumn only as a time for mourning the death he sees all about him.

In autumn l'Allegro, like the blazing trees about him, is in his glory. He

tramps happily through the drifts of chattering leaves, wondering at the gloss and beauty of a chestnut that emerged from such an ugly shell; laughing at the busy squirrels who scamper from their occupations at his noisy approach, running to catch a glimpse of a wedge of honking geese, who announce the approach as efficiently as any streamliner. The brisk wind, which playfully ruffles his hair, carries the poignant smell of leaf smoke and brings near the distant scrape of a rake on cement. A season of festivities, harvest moon, pumpkin pies, trees letting down their golden hair—these are autumn's themes. *I'Allegro.*

Yet, in spite of all the splendor about him, *Il Penseroso* registers only an increasing melancholia. He wanders through a trackless maze of leaves, which, by their falling have left the bare arms of their nourishers stretched imploringly against a pitiless sky. Absent-mindedly, he pulls at a burr in his trouser-legend, as he pauses to look at a half-grown rabbit, which stares back at him with dark, liquid eyes, bidding a final, silent farewell until spring. Suddenly, the wordless conversation is interrupted by a harsh shriek overhead, quickly followed by another, and another. The geese are flying south, to food and shelter and security from cold; the rabbit disappears in a thicket. *Il Penseroso* turns toward home, the chilly wind tossing and twisting his coat about him. Gone are the dewy violets, the gliding butterflies, the nodding goldenrod, the long, lazy days. Autumn is here.

The Phenomenon on the Prairie

HELEN LEVIN
Rhetoric 102, Theme 4

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY MILES FROM CHICAGO AND thirty-five miles from the University of Illinois is one of the most unusual notches on the "Corn Belt"—Danville. This small city, like a spider's web encircling the neighboring farming communities, is just far enough from Chicago to be free of cosmopolitan chaos, yet close enough to absorb some of the city's more notorious habits. A typical midsummer Saturday well illustrates the vacillating personality of this unusual town.

After supper, there are Municipal Band concerts in the park. Most of the town attends, the eldest sitting in canvas camp chairs, wearily flicking away flies and reliving the days when they were young, as the band director leads the aggregation of local instrument players in the perennial Strauss waltzes and Sousa marches. Younger couples push baby carriages down the lantern-illuminated walks, and as the music weaves its spell, they forget for a time the budget and other immediate problems. In a remote corner of the park, some of the high-school crowd play tennis. Their buoyant laughter drifts over the courts: the only other sounds are those of the tennis ball

as they thud against rackets, and of nocturnal insects droning as they swarm in frantic clouds around the floodlights. Snatches of music come on an occasional breeze from the other side of the park, and now and then, one hears the swoosh of a five-year-old skimming down a slide. About eleven o'clock, the lanterns wink "good night," and gathering up their camp chairs, children, and tennis rackets, the tired citizens leave for home, or for a soda at the inn on the lake.

But while all this is going on, another part of Danville wants excitement. Red lights beckon on Green Street as the prostitutes put the finishing touches on their makeup in anticipation of the evening's trade. The pungent odor of cheap perfume comes wavering out the plastic-curtained windows and seems to permeate even the pavement of the streets. Tension runs high. Raids by the sheriff's office are frequent. Often, grim-faced M. P.'s from nearby Chanute Air Force Base park their official cars outside the notorious shacks, returning after a few minutes with some chagrined airman arrested on the one block that is "off limits" to all military personnel.

And past the barns of sleeping cattle on the South Highway, still more excitement can be found. "The Lamplighter," "Don's," "The Glass Pitcher," and "Alibi Inn" are filled with people seeking excitement. At the "Jungle Club," tables and booths are brimming with people laughing loudly. Cigarettes glow like miniature phosphorous torches scattered here and there in the hazy gloom. The only sign of coolness in the stifling atmosphere is the frosty "sweat" coating the glasses and beer bottles. The dancers contort violently to the brassy strains of a Negro band. All this is set aside, like a Rivera tableau, from the outside world and the highway and the sleeping cattle.

Dawn comes, and the glaring Sunday morning sun melts over the city. The prostitutes lock their doors and remove their stale makeup, settling themselves into exhaustion until night returns, bringing with it a new assortment of airmen, youths from neighboring farms and universities, and unhappy husbands. And across the other end of town, families gather around their breakfast tables, immersed in the Sunday paper and thoughts as mundane as Sunday picnics and washing the family car.

On the square, the bells peal cheerfully, calling the citizens to St. Patrick's and the First Presbyterian church. And some come, hardly aware that as they pray for the sins of their fellow men, they are praying for those sleeping on Green Street, and for those waking up with splitting headaches after a night on the South Highway.

And Danville rests on the Illinois prairie like some strange unknown phenomenon: by day the ideal home town, by night a city of infamy and sin.

The Killer

LAWRENCE D. SWIDLER

Rhetoric 102, Theme 10

ELEVEN O'CLOCK ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, I WAS ALONE. What kind of a deal was that? There I sat in my new convertible on a gorgeous July night and where was my girl? She was still at her hen party with all of her giggly girl friends. Why didn't she come out already? She told me ten-thirty. Finally! Here she came, at last. As I saw her walk down to the car, the wait didn't seem bad at all—no, not bad at all.

She jumped in next to me, I got my "hello kiss," and we took off. She said she was thirsty; so right away I whipped over to the Steak 'n' Shake. While we were sitting over our sodas, some rod-jockey next to me started to feel his oats. His buddy sneered, "Y'wanta drag?" at me, and laughed. He must've thought there was a rocket under his hood in order to dream of "taking" me. I told him that when I wanted him, I'd find him. He yelled back, as they left the lot, "I'll see you on the highway, dusteater!"

We lingered for a few more minutes over our drinks before I felt a swelling urge inside. I pulled out slowly onto the main drag and drove south, toward the highway. The air was clean and crisp and the hum of the motor reminded me of a panther, ready to leap. When we hit the highway, I edged her up to seventy, until we left traffic behind.

I was ready. The time was right. Over the next hill, or the one after that, I'd see the tail lights I was looking for. I hit the accelerator. The car jumped like Br'er Rabbit. The speedometer started its climb around the dial. My girl stopped talking as the needle passed one hundred and started to breathe hard when it rose on toward one-hundred-and-twenty.

We hit the top of the hill, or was it the next hill, or the one after that? Anyway in front of us about a mile away was a flashing red light. "Well, I figured, "they caught me in a radar net. Now what'll I try?" But I didn't have to try anything, because as we got closer we saw that the blinker wasn't for us. There, on the turnoff to the Forest Preserves, was another car, but this one was all over the turnoff. It looked as if it had bounced off of the concrete lane divider. The body of the old job looked more like an accordion than a car, and the two fellows that were in it wound up splattered across the concrete. They'd see me on the road, I thought; sure they would. Nobody's gonna see me, not at those speeds, anyway. No sir, not again.

Humble Town Refuses Role as Fair City

CYRUS G. MUETH

Rhetoric 101, Theme 9

Editor :

When the officials of a small town, such as ours, lose their insight and good judgment, it is sometimes necessary for the younger generation to assume partial responsibility in order to save the reputation of their fair city. And if the conflict between the younger generation and the town fathers is not too much of an additional burden on the reputation of our city, then truly it will survive to be a town of which we may boast.

A few days ago you ran a news article concerning the assault and "merciless beating" of our one-man police force by a group of juveniles. It is obvious that your knowledge of the incident was derived from the only known witness to the assault—our police chief himself. According to your article, Jack Wird, while on duty late Friday night, observed a lone driver run the stop sign at First and Main. He pursued the car with siren screaming and lights flashing; but the motorist ignored both, driving at top speed out of town on route 41. About one mile outside of the city limits, the driver turned onto the old Highbank Road and proceeded east. Mr. Wird overtook the car at the edge of Deer Creek and, in the process of arresting the driver, was suddenly attacked from the rear by a group of young men who had emerged from the woods. He was "badly beaten and left to die" in the middle of the old dirt road. The persons involved and their purpose are supposedly unknown.

Lest this event pass without benefit to our fair city, I am writing this letter to present the facts to all our citizens and to give to our town board a true picture of their lawman. I also wish to make it clear that I lay no blame on the editor for publishing what he presumed were the facts presented by a supposedly reliable source.

For many years we have had a peaceful, quiet town with no juvenile delinquents, no habitual traffic offenders, and no frequent arrests. Six months ago we were in need of a new police officer; and Mr. Jack Wird, having resigned his important position as police lieutenant in a city twenty times our size, was chosen to enforce our law. Since that time 25 m.p.h. speed limit signs have been posted along our whole quarter-mile of Main Street, known only as Highway 41 even to some of our prosperous old-timers. (Since this is the only thoroughfare through our thriving metropolis, it should appropriately be named after our zealous reformer; already some are referring to it as Wird's Windfall.) Every Friday night from about 9 to 11, we can hear the habitual screaming of the police siren as another unfortunate motorist is caught in Wird's speed trap. Or perhaps the anxious traveler accelerated

before his car came to a dead stop at First and Main. It takes but a few minutes to bring the motorist into Judge Brown's office, ideally located at Third and Main, where the poor victim is fined according to his apparent prosperity.

The main principle of this system cannot be overlooked. Mr. Wird took this position with the condition that, plus his monthly salary, he would be paid a generous percentage of all money collected from arrests. Nothing has been said about Mr. Wird's seat at the bar in Tony's Tavern. It has been rumored that money runs low by Friday night; so Mr. Wird's pockets must be relined for his weekend spree.

Two weeks ago an attempt was made to persuade the town board to place Mr. Wird on a monthly salary alone. This attempt was made to halt the degraded reputation our city is acquiring. It seems that Mr. Wird and the board talked the matter over, and it was decided that the law must have complete backing if it is to survive. So Mr. Wird continued his relentless task of subduing the criminals and enforcing our law and order.

Last Friday night a group of young men committed a grave criminal offense. They attempted, in the way they knew best, to stop the degradation of our humble town. But if the obvious reason behind their effort is so easily overlooked, we truly have a town destined for self-destruction. These young citizens lured our innocent police chief to his "near destruction" and "left him to die" in the middle of Highbank Road. Well, how many of our citizens would consider that "merciless beating" an attempt on a man's life if they knew the real facts? Actually Mr. Wird was subjected to a humiliating face-lashing, and a few solid blows to his middle, then left sitting in a tub of ice water without the formality of his breeches. We hope the press will be better informed on future events. And unless the officials of this town assume their responsibilities, their sons and daughters will bear the reputation imposed on their home town.

Anonymous

What My Hometown Needs Most

ROBERTA SAX

Rhetoric 101, Theme 11

MOST TOWNS NEED A NEW FIRE ENGINE OR SCHOOL OR hospital, but Middletown needs Sam. Now this may seem idiotic but to Alice this is a real problem. As far as she is concerned, Middletown is deserted, desolate, dismal, and dingy without Sam. To her, Middletown without Sam is like Sears without Roebuck, ham without eggs, Liberal without his mother. And so, as she listens to Elvis Presley records, she tries to figure out how she has become involved with Sam and their problem.

Alice thinks back one year to the day she had first entered college. She had come with the idea of dating millions of boys, playing the field, and, in general, having one hell of a time. Her life was planned: four years of college and then marriage. But in between there were to be no serious attachments. After all, hadn't she been constantly told that what she did in the next four years would shape her future? She was there primarily To Learn.

In the beginning, things went according to schedule. Alice dated a different boy every weekend. She talked and laughed and held pinkies in the movies and had lots of fun, but she refused to give anyone a second thought. Greek, Indee—they were all the same.

Then "Out Of An Orange Colored Sky," as its says in the song, came Sam. Of course, it was quite unexpected (that's how things like this usually happen); he ran her down with his motor scooter. They talked for awhile, and then she limped home to do homework. A half-hour later he called. How he got her name and found her telephone number was a mystery to her, but "where there's a will there's a way" she had decided philosophically.

That first night they went bowling (Sam won), and pretty soon they were seen together often. And many times, as she sat quietly and watched Sam crack his bubble gum, Alice tried to analyze her feelings towards him. He wasn't handsome, although his horn-rimmed bifocals gave him a distinguished, scholarly appearance. His physique wasn't of Tarzan calibre, but well, you know those "Before" and "After" pictures in the advertisements? Sam looked like "During." He always said she ate too much and should go on a diet; he told her what to do and how to do it; he was sometimes inconsiderate—he wouldn't let her watch Mickey Mouse one night on television. He thought it too plebian. And yet, Alice obeyed all his wishes and never got angry. What had happened to her strong will power, her solid constitution, her decisive mind?

Poor Alice went around in a daze. She couldn't concentrate, she couldn't sleep, she lit the wrong end of her filter-tip cigarettes. Was it love? She had to be sure! One evening, she found out for certain. She missed the Mickey Mouse Show and it didn't bother her. "This it it!" she decided. "Sam is more important to me than anything else."

And so, this is their problem. How to get Middletown a Sam. Sam lives one thousand miles away. What will she do all summer without him? She can't very well visit him and Sam can't go to Middletown—he doesn't have the gas money for his scooter. Perplexed, Alice ponders and ponders until she finds a solution. "Eureka!" she says, coining a phrase, "I have found a solution!"

And she runs over to the Middletown Chamber of Commerce and announces to everyone, "Middletown needs Sam. He is good, kind, brave, and all that jazz, and I love him and I want him here because I'm lonely, and like that!" The chairman looks at her. She looks at the chairman. Finally,

he turns to the others and says, "Gentlemen, every town needs one good Sam to be complete. We shall bring him here as a Representative of Good Will. Besides, look at the free advertising."

Alice is overjoyed. She turns to the chairman of the Middletown Chamber of Commerce, and with tears of happiness in her eyes, she says, "Thanks, Dad!"

My Theory

JOHN H. ALTHOFF
Rhetoric 102, Theme 10

WHY CAN'T THE AVERAGE ENGINEER SPEAK OR WRITE? If an educator answered this question, he would solve a complex problem facing industry today. Colleges and technical schools today lay the blame on the limited number of English composition and speech courses in the engineering curriculum. I do not agree, and, at the risk of being trite, I now present my theory.

To write a paper or speech of any kind, for any audience, takes imagination. The word "imagination" is the key to the whole problem. An engineer is a machine, and machines do not have imagination. Machines do not create. This is the fundamental difference between calculating and imagining. To think without imagination is to calculate, and calculating is a mere rearranging of the pieces in a puzzle. Calculating is not making a new type of puzzle, for the same pieces are used. The new type of puzzle must be created.

There are some machines such as the Univac or the Illiac that can calculate, but they use the same pieces of information or information derived from these pieces. They do not have the ability to reach out and get an idea completely unrelated to the information that has been fed into them. They cannot create. They do not have imagination.

When the engineer comes from a factory like the College of Engineering at this institution, he goes into the world packed to the top of his cold, calculating cranium with engineering theories and formulae, but with nothing else. Has he been trained to calculate? Yes. Has his imagination been trained? No.

Upon meeting a graduate engineer, one finds that he can design bridges, aircraft, and electrical marvels, but cannot express his opinions about other matters. He soon runs out of material since he thinks nothing *but* engineering. This one-sided knowledge is the engineer's downfall. He has not been given the opportunity of free thought for thought's sake alone, and the resulting nourishment of his imagination. This undernourishment results directly in an inability to compose a relatively good paper or speech.

There are exceptions, yes. But these exceptions, we find, are men who take an active interest in other fields than engineering. This is a different breed of engineer. These men are thinkers, and, remember, they *can* speak and write.

The Decline and Fall of an Empire

JOHN A. WOODRUFF

Rhetoric 101, Theme 9

I AM SITTING HERE IN MY STUDY VIEWING ONE OF THE books on ancient history, and wondering how a whole nation of intelligent people could be so oblivious to their destruction. When the campaign against them really began to take effect, the so very few persons that did realize what was happening were completely helpless. History was repeating itself. The United States of America was decaying and would crumble just as the Roman Empire had done before.

You must understand that the situation during the last half of the twentieth century was far from new. It was not the first time that one nation sought to overthrow another. The method, however, is the unusual part of the story. The population was simply allowed to grow old and die!

After having unsuccessfully employed violent means for almost a decade, the Russians finally conceived the Master Plan. If the Americans were not allowed to reproduce, in a hundred years there would be no Americans. The method by which this plan was accomplished was a masterpiece in the study of human nature and in the particular nature of the American male. The women were simply and voluntarily defeminized!

The battle plans were carried out quickly and efficiently. Top men were sent out to the fashion centers of the world with orders to work their way into the elite circle of designers and attain a position that would allow them to carry out the Master Plan. Within a year, they had accomplished their objective. The American female was no longer attractive to the American male. People who were normally engaged in chasing women were now engaged in illegal activities, and the police forces rapidly became inadequate. In a last, desperate attempt, the wearing of a sack dress was prohibited. But even this was too late. The men were completely independent of women, and soon even the women ceased to care.

It is a sad story, and the story of a great victory. The Russians had overthrown the American Government without losing a soldier or firing a shot. They waited until it was a nation of old bachelors and spinsters and then brought in their healthy young men. But they had learned from experience. They made sure their young women were clothed in tight skirts and sweaters, and the wearing of a sack dress was a crime punishable by death.

One Way of Looking at It

The word *prejudice*, in my opinion, is one of the most misused words in our language. It is used as a wall behind which people of any race, religion, nationality, or other special group can hide from the people of groups foreign to their own. It is most commonly used as a defensive measure by a person who finds himself losing an argument; he protects himself by saying, "You're just prejudiced."

BRIAN SANDBERG, *Rhetoric 102*

Empress of Calvary

SUE DIVAN

Rhetoric 102, Theme 12

THE TOWN IS AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS; THE TIME IS late April; the year is 1886. The quietly austere yellow brick mansion sits back a few hundred feet from Main Street of the peaceful college town. The giant pines and the dense evergreen hedge do not afford a ready view, but looking closely one might glimpse the garden and the clumps of rhododendron and daffodils blooming flamboyantly in the early spring. Looking closer, and perhaps opening the gate and walking up the old brick walk, one might even catch a fleeting glimpse of a white-clad figure vanishing ghostly down a corridor inside.²

The house—the Dickinson “homestead.” The figure—Emily Dickinson, fifty-five years old, a recluse from the world, said to be the greatest woman poet who ever wrote in English.³

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst on December 10, 1830. She died in the house in which she was born; after she was twenty-six, she rarely left it.⁴ She has always been shrouded in mystery, and her life has been and will continue to be a controversy among her readers and biographers, no matter how many attempts are made to analyze her life and work. Even in the town in which she lived, she became a legendary figure. She served perennial roots, cakes, and cookies with cryptic little notes to neighbors and children, and became, in short, the village oddity.⁵

Emily was a dedicated artist, shy and a bit fugitive perhaps, but a woman who selected a way of life as deliberately as she chose a metaphor. For over one-half century, curiosity has spent itself in the direction of “Who was Emily’s lover?” “What prompted her seclusion?” “What were the influences that determined her life and thought?” “Why did she write the way she did?”

Though all the evidence is purely circumstantial and will always remain so, the inescapable conclusion drawn is this: Emily Dickinson’s poetry was inspired by the men in her life and the influential environment of her ultimate seclusion.

The men she knew, the “muses” who presumably inspired her love poems, she did not know well.⁶ The vanished lover could have been any one of the large number of fleeting male acquaintances Emily had. Her poetry and seclusion are said to have been prompted by this legendary inspirer. The

² Millicent Bingham, *Ancestor’s Brocade*, p. 3.

³ Louis Untermeyer, *Modern American Poetry*, p. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶ James Southworth, *Some Modern American Poets*, p. 17.

sanction of public opinion has given the legend of a broken heart such vitality that it has withstood all attempts to disprove it.⁷ Having accepted the theory that she renounced the world because of a broken heart and wrote her poems because of one man, her biographers differ only as to the identity of the candidate for her love.⁸ So they try to decide which man.

The youthful friendships of her younger days were followed by a succession of deep, lasting attachments, on Emily's part at any rate. Among the young men to whom she felt drawn in her youth was Leonard Humphrey, the principal of Amherst Academy, whose unexpected death when Emily was nineteen was her "first affliction."⁹

Her first "muse" was the young lawyer, Benjamin F. Newton, who, some say, was the first to give direction to her career as an artist.¹⁰ He fed her eager interest as he talked with her about the nature of existence. In the late 1840's, he was a law student in the office of Emily's father. While in Amherst, he introduced Emily and her sister, Lavinia, to the writings of the Brontë sisters, and he presented Emily with a copy of Emerson's poems in 1849, two years after they were first published. In 1850 he set up his own practice in a neighboring town; in the following year he married. In 1853, in his thirty-third year, and when Emily was twenty-two, he died of tuberculosis. Ben Newton had been one of Emily's earliest "preceptors" and his memory always remained within her.¹¹ Newton awakened in Emily a response to intellectuality and an appreciation of literature, which later made her call him "the friend who taught me immortality." It would seem, then, that when Emily was about twenty, her latent talents were stirred by a gentle, grave young lawyer who taught her how to observe the world. Perhaps during the five years after Newton's death in 1853, she attempted, in a manner, to fashion verses, but her first muse had left the land, and to bestir her talent further, she had to await the coming of the second.¹²

Though all evidence is, again, circumstantial, the supposition is that in 1854, Emily fell deeply in love with Reverend Charles Wadsworth, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Lavinia and Emily, then aged twenty-three, were visiting an old school friend in Philadelphia for two weeks early in May of 1854. Though there is no record of the event, one must suppose that Emily went to hear Wadsworth preach. Perhaps she met him then. The only certain fact is that he called on her in Amherst some five years later. That visit and another he paid her briefly in the summer of 1880 are the only two known, and quite possibly the only two he ever made. But

⁷ Bingham, *Ancestor's Brocade*, p. 97.

⁸ Bingham, *Emily Dickinson, A Revelation*, p. 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7 and 8.

¹⁰ Thomas Johnson, "Prisms of a Poet," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 33:16 (June 1950).

¹¹ Johnson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Introduction, XX.

¹² *Ibid.*, XXI.

letters that she wrote after his death state much and imply more.¹³ She called this profound and eloquent "man of God" her "dearest earthly friend."¹⁴ He was her "shepherd from little girl-hood," this preacher "whom to know was life."¹⁵

Emily Dickinson was surely born to her talent as a poet, but she felt no dedication to her art until she met Reverend Wadsworth. After their meeting, she began desultorily writing a few poems of nature, such as "Bring Me the Sunset in A Cup" and "These Are the Days When the Birds Come Back." In the following year, an increasing proportion of poems were written with deepened purpose. Then came the event of Wadsworth's first visit to her in 1859. A volcanic commotion in the emotional life of Emily Dickinson was becoming apparent in her poetry now.¹⁶

The Philadelphia pastor, approximately fifty years old at this time, was at the zenith of his mature influence, fifteen years married, and the head of a family—an established man of God whose rectitude was unquestioned.¹⁷ In such a career, there was no room for the slightest wayward inclination. One could readily see how Emily might idolize such a man, but what could she have meant to him? Charles Wadsworth was a man of intense sympathies for troubled spirits. People clung to him, and Emily Dickinson was undoubtedly one of them.¹⁸ Both of his visits were probably made at her request on occasions when he was traveling nearby. His youngest son, Dr. William Wadsworth, contends that his father happened to call on Emily in Amherst ("There came a day at summer's full, entirely for me. . .") because an intimate friend lived nearby whom he sometimes visited. His kindness prompted him to pay her a parochial call. Emily may have written to him previously to ask him for comfort. At any rate, he corresponded with her after that visit and "I got so I could stir the box in which his letters grew. . .," she wrote.¹⁹ His letters of spiritual counsel were certainly translated by Emily into symbols of an agonizing, unbearable intimacy. She brooded upon them until she felt herself dedicated to him. Her love poems say it over and over.²⁰ The letters they exchanged did not survive their deaths. Except to her sister, who never saw Wadsworth, she talked to no one about him. That fact alone signifies the place he filled in her emotions.²¹ The picture that emerges of Wadsworth is that of a man utterly consecrated to his ministry, happily married and devoted to his family, finding fulfillment in his power to uphold and strengthen

¹³ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, XXI and XXII.

¹⁴ Bingham, *E. D., A Revelation*, p. 8.

¹⁵ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, Introduction, XXII.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, XXI.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, XXII.

¹⁸ George Whicher, "Pursuit of the Overtakeless," *Nation*, 169:14 (July 2, 1949).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14 and 15, quoted from Emily Dickinson's letters.

²⁰ Untermeyer, p. 94.

²¹ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, Introduction, XXII.

the wavering souls of his flock. "Out of Emily's thwarted longing for companionship with the adored clergyman came a lyric outpouring which included the most intensely moving love poems ever written by an American poet," George Whicher has written.²² Whereas Newton as a muse had awakened her to a sense of her talents, Wadsworth as a muse made her a poet.

By 1862, Emily's creative impulse was at a floodtide, and by 1865, the greater part of her poetic inspirations was spent. However, she continued to write poetry until her death. But one concludes that nearly two-thirds of her poems were created in the brief span of eight years, in her early thirties, from the years 1858 to 1865.

The extent to which Reverend Wadsworth realized the intensity of her adoration is not known. His son says that he would not even have cared for her poetry. The poetry he liked was of a different order.²³ However, the ultimate crisis in her life seems to have been precipitated when Wadsworth accepted a call to a church in San Francisco in 1861. To Emily, his removal was terrifying. She would be without his guidance. It is at this time that she began to dress entirely in white, adopting, as she called it, her "white election." The name Calvary now appears in her poems. In 1862, she used it nine times, always in verses charged with intense emotion. She speaks of herself as the "queen" of Calvary, and grieving for her lost lover, she recalls "old times in Calvary."²⁴ In 1870, Wadsworth was back in Philadelphia in another church, where he remained until his death on April 1, 1882. Though nothing would again wring from her the anguish and poetic fulfillment of the years 1861 through 1865, she continued to write verses throughout her life.²⁵ At his death she applied to him a line from Tennyson: "Of love that never found its earthly close, what sequel?" Thus, more than any other man, Wadsworth has been identified with the lover of her poems.²⁶

Among other men who have often been disputed as the inspirers of Emily Dickinson is Edward Hunt, husband of author Helen Hunt Jackson, one of Emily's close friends. One author discovered a secret lover in George Gould, also of Amherst College. Still another went so far as to accuse her of a Freudian father-complex.²⁷ Most of the stories of these incongruous lovers have been disposed of, however, and in their place has emerged the more preferred story of the Reverend Wadsworth as the true inspirer.

Other deep attachments after Wadsworth were only two, if the evidence is reliable. Samuel Bowles of Springfield, whom she loved "beyond sentimentality," and Judge Otis P. Lord, one of her father's closest friends, were each

²² Whicher, p. 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁴ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, Introduction, XXIII.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, XXIV.

²⁶ Whicher, p. 14.

²⁷ Untermeyer, pp. 90 and 91.

serious attachments, but they did little to influence Emily's poetry, as they came about long after the peak of her writing years.²⁸ If there must be a single individual who influenced her love lyrics, and it seems, according to the public, that there must, the most plausible one, from all circumstantial evidence, is Reverend Charles Wadsworth, who, like all her other "muses," was totally unaware of the havoc that he was creating. He and the other men who may have been her inspiration were the men she knew least, who never suspected that they were inspiring poems that would later prove immortal.

The mysterious event or events which prompted her withdrawal from the world, her seclusion at an early age, have been variously detailed and disputed. Biographers have always searched to find the reason why good-looking Emily ("My hair is bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves. . .") immured herself in her father's sprawling mansion for over fifteen years.²⁹ The legend of Emily Dickinson's withdrawal from the world because of a youthful disappointment in love has been wholly accepted as the truth because it is the most evident, logical, and easily understood theory. The legend arose during Emily's lifetime because the Amherst villagers could not understand either her secluded life or the fact that she wrote poetry.³⁰ Though there are hints of the vanished lover, we are never actually made to see him, feel him, or realize his being, where there is a complete projection of Emily—her heart, soul, and influences—into her tricks of thought. The much-sought but still relatively unknown prompter of her poems and seclusion may have been Wadsworth, Newton, Hunt, Gould—but it is not he who is immortalized in her work. It is Emily. There were outward events and attachments in her life, but in them the secret of her life does not lie. The emotional experience of Emily Dickinson cannot be defined in terms of thwarted love; it cannot be limited to her feelings toward any single individual. "A broken heart is not needed to explain her way of life. To try to understand it in such terms is to fail to grasp its quality."

If there was no man who broke her heart, what, then, prompted Emily's desire to be a recluse, to withdraw from the world into the seclusion of her father's house? Was it abnormal? a sign of morbidity?

To begin with, the withdrawal was gradual. During much of her life she did live in seclusion, but it was a seclusion which narrowed with the years. When did it begin? Not in her twenties, certainly. In 1854, she was visiting Washington with her sister. Five years later she was still doing her "courtships," as she called her social obligations, although throughout this time, she was showing more and more disinclination to mingle with the villagers.

²⁸ Bingham, *E. D., A Revelation*, p. 8.

²⁹ "Out of the Top Drawer," *Time*, 55:91 and 92 (June 12, 1950); quoted from Emily Dickinson's letters.

³⁰ Bingham, *E. D., A Revelation*, p. 58.

³¹ Bingham, *Ancestor's Brocade*, p. 98.

the early 1860's, she completed the gradual seclusion. She was rarely seen outside the house and received very few visitors. Now at last, she had become the white-robed recluse of the legend.³² Emily's seclusion, the dominant theme in every study of her life, will doubtless continue to be a stumbling block as long as there are biographers to study her. If it did not happen as the result of a heartbreak in youth, what are the other possible answers?

Throughout her life, people were of utmost importance to her, but contacts with them exhausted her so emotionally that she shrank from all but the most intimate. There was about her an intensity which terrified some people. For her, actual living was a heavy load. Thus her seclusion became nearly absolute in the latter part of her life, and she found her "saving relief" through poetry.³³ This becomes one plausible theory.

Another is that her wish not to see her fellow townsmen was primarily due to the fact that with people in general, she had little in common. "All men say 'What' to me," was her way of putting it. She was reluctant to squander precious time in pointless talk.³⁴

Some readers think that she was afraid of and shunned the realities of everyday life; that she found the greater reality in the realm of the soul and imagination; that she found the ecstasy of living greater when alone than she would have in the Amherst of her day. She found greater happiness in her seclusion than she would have experienced among the Amherst matrons with their small talk of husbands, babies, and cooking. She set her life apart for the art of poetry, and so unwilling was she to be diverted from what she thought was her calling that she deliberately chose obscurity.³⁵

No explanation of why Emily Dickinson lived her life in retirement can satisfy everyone. Not all people can understand all things. But no one can question that what she valued most was a chance to explore the confines of her own spirit—which could be accomplished only in seclusion, close to the certainties of her own soul. "Her poetry could spring only from the gradual expanding of a soul which functioned where it found peace—in solitude."³⁶ For Emily, solitude was a necessity, her natural state. Like all creative persons, she needed time in which to read, to write, to think, and to be still. Her father's wish always to have her at home weighed heavily upon her; however, a more dominant reason for this inch-by-inch withdrawal was simply lack of time. This desire for a normal blossoming of her impressionable spirit resulted from the feeling that she lived in the presence of God—and Immortality.³⁷

³² Bingham, *E. D., A Revelation*, p. 4.

³³ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, Foreword by Johnson.

³⁴ Bingham, *E. D., A Revelation*, p. 6.

³⁵ Johnson, *The Poems of E. D.*, Foreword.

³⁶ Bingham, *Ancestor's Brocade*, pp. 322 and 323.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Whatever the reason, her poetry was influenced by and written in the seclusion. Emily was a recluse in the sense only that she withdrew from village life in order to investigate things that interested her more. She explored the secrets of nature and life. Nothing was too trivial or familiar to excite her interest. She took nothing for granted: snakes, flies, grass, stones, the rising of the moon—all were of the essence of miracle. Emily's real love was creation. Any object, man or earthworm, was caught in shining words. She had a power within her which, no matter how slight the stimulus, and might be no more than an exchange of glances, could create a poem. No poet was so aware of the minutiae of her daily life as Emily, and perhaps no one was so unconscious that they were minutiae.³⁹

Though her seclusion prompted great poetry, it also proved a hindrance to her works in many evident ways. Emily, at times, too much resembled *Great Expectation's* Miss Havisham, who shut herself away from the actual world of men and women, living alone with only herself and her memories. Emily escaped behind physical barriers.⁴⁰ Such a life is not enough. Her imaginative experiences gained in intensity because of her seclusion, but the roots of these experiences failed to go deeply into daily life. Many poems reveal her inability to grasp the joy of reality. She accustomed herself to a life of memory—remembrances which were rootless.⁴¹ Had this seclusion come after her emotional maturity had been fully developed, she could have gained much. Coming before, it is her loss more than her gain. She missed the completion of maturity that broader social contacts could have given her. These characteristics are all of the one basic fact that emotionally, Emily probably never outgrew adolescence. Perhaps her love poems sprang from the very incompleteness of her experience.⁴²

In May, 1886, Emily was ill. According to the minutely detailed diary of Mable Loomis Todd, the next-door neighbor of the Dickinsons for years, a hope for Emily was given up on May 15. On that day she describes Emily as "just leaving." The eerie presence, the invisible voice, the white phantom in the corridor came to a sudden end; Emily died about 6:00 that evening. According to the diary, on the day of Emily's funeral, May 19, it was a "most deliciously brilliant, sunny afternoon" for the "simple services." Emily Brontë's poem *Immortality* was read, and the procession then walked quietly across the sunny fields to the cemetery. One who might have been watching the procession as it passed slowly through the blossoming fields would remember only how small the coffin was.⁴⁴

³⁸ Bingham, *Ancestor's Brocade*, pp. 98 and 99.

³⁹ Southworth, p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Bingham, *Ancestor's Brocade*, pp. 12 and 13.

It is plausible that any one of the many men Emily Dickinson knew could have inspired her love poems. It is plausible that from the very incompleteness of her experience may have sprung her love poems. It is conceivable that one of that number of men could have prompted her seclusion. It is conceivable that her withdrawal from the world was brought about by her desire for solitude and time in which to "blossom." One thing is sure—excuses for Miss Dickinson are not necessary. When all is said, explanations do not explain. What else, then, matters? Whatever the provocation, all that remains is the poetry.

Denied a public, even of one, Emily perfected her imperfections in secret. Lacking the partner, she played her game with herself. Yet when all the biographies are considered, the most successful game was the one she played on the world—a solitary recluse who had the world in her garden; an escapist who summoned infinity with the trick of a forefinger. It is doubtful if, in spite of her isolation, there was ever a less lonely woman.⁴⁵

She surely contained a universe within herself, and all things considered, perhaps in the end she did not need the world. For Emily Dickinson is a major poet—the greatest woman poet who ever wrote in English.

⁴⁵ Untermeyer, p. 94.

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One is able to pick the environment into which he is born; he must adjust himself to fit the type of pattern that is prevalent in the society into which he has entered. If he is unable or unwilling to conform to the group in which he finds himself, he will rebel against it, and he will become the "square peg," fighting the set patterns. If he is to stay in this environment and be happy in it, then he has to adopt the characteristics common to this society. If he does conform, then he will have accomplished what the Parisian fashion designer suggests—he will have taken on "the form of the garment that envelops" him.

GEORGE G. BRYAN, *Rhetoric* 101

Rhet as Writ

Gulliver manages to find land which is inhabited by minute people called Lilliputians.

Westinghouse scraped a whole heating plant because it was not paying for itself.

A fish was caught that had supposedly been dead for millions of years.

I unanimously agreed.

The two main clauses are relative and irrelevant.

Am I ready for college? This poses a very important question which I think is taken very lightly by far less students than should be.

There's nothing like a good mystery, or a moving love story, or plain disaster to turn people's minds off the turmoil and commotion of the days work.

You must know what places to go to and what places not to go to and how to dress in each one.

We never got a chance to get the strict formal type date in but everyone enjoyed him very roughly.

Since time immoral . . .

This doorway is a large stone in the path leading from a child's world into adulthood.

Women are playing a vital role in industry in this modern era. They are constantly being educated in designing, chemical engineering, mathematics, and many other fields which are detrimental to our nation's economic system.

We should be willing to give aid to a revolting people who want freedom not fail to do as we did in Hungary and Poland.

